

Abilene Reflector.

REFLECTOR PUB. CO., Proprietors
ABILENE, KANSAS.

THE VANISHED YEARS.

The year! The vanished years! The cycles
With their majestic sweep, and bear away
Into the shadows sea, where slung
Endless ebb- and flow, the years that would not
stay.

The years! How would their vistas seem to me
If I could traverse them just as they were
Bathed in the light that never was on sea
Or shore! The blossom, garlanded parterre
Is but a lane all fennel-fringed that strays
By meadows daisy-pied in memory.
And through the silence the skylark's lays
Drift to my heart in strains of melody.

O bluminal, blissful orchard aisles, it seems
The smile of lovely pink blossoms floats
Through misty and distance athwart my
dreams.

Commencing with the croir's woosomeness!
Happy harmonies, that never let
The dulcet strains drop to the minor key!
O happy harp that has no string at rest,
No plaintive strain in all its minstrelsy!

The years! They dawned and waned with shift
And change, and in the twilight
And seem in retrospect o'erclouded
With shades forever blue and smiles divine
Beaming from Heaven with songs accom-
panied.

O land that lies afar! O time that seems
A vision fair of blissful melody
Where in childhood moods and maiden dreams
Found hidden lives, unwritten poetry!

O years! No summing song or yearning plea
Avalis to stay their flight, or ransom one
Halecyon season, save as memory
In joy's avivie holds it for her own!

—Rosaline E. Jones, in N. Y. Sun.

ARCHIE.

The Sad Reminiscences of a Fond and Sorrowing Sister.

Without it was night. The soft, white snow clung to the gables and eaves. The house was dark, except for a faint glimmer from a side window—the glimmer of flames on the grate from a fire-place within. The snow was still falling—laidly sailing down in great white flakes, brushing the cheek of the passer-by, with a touch as gentle as that of a summer zephyr. The clear, sweet tones of a violin floated out upon the air. Above, all was dark. Not a star was visible. Within, an open grate with a cherry fire, the room lighted only by its flames. A pale figure in reclining in a large arm-chair, supported by pillows and muffled in a grey afghan. A boy of perhaps fifteen summers stands upon the rug before the fire, with the bow poised lightly over the strings and his eyes fixed dreamily on the fire. With a slow graceful movement the bow glides over the strings. Oh, the sweet zephyrs! The fragrant odors borne on the summer breeze! The habblings of the merry brook yonder; the golden sunbeams dancing down the gay, free song of the robin swinging on the leafy bough; the long grasses waving and the white roses that nod over it, and the velvet turf that covers it. The setting sun's last lingering rays fall across it, flooding the plain white stone with the one word "Archie" cut in its glistening surface. Fainter, fainter, sweeter, slower, the music died away.

For a moment there was silence. Then, with a weary sigh, the figure in the arm-chair spoke:

"Archie, my music has aroused bitter-sweet memories. Bring your hassoock and sit by my knee while I tell you of the sad fate of my only brother, Archie."

The boy obeyed, and the gentle voice went on:

"My only brother—the gayest, handsomest boy that ever brightened a household by his pranks. When he was but fourteen and I but sixteen, our dear mother sickened and died. How we missed her! Our father shut himself up in his room and refused to see any one, ordering his food brought to him. He had indeed a broken heart, and the blow well nigh crazed him. Our old nurse, Twickham—the dearest old soul that ever lived—was established as house-keeper. She had cared for us from infancy, and loved us with a mother's love."

"Archie was the light of the household. Our constant joy and vexation. As time somewhat dulled the keen edge of his sorrow, father plunged into business again. We resided in the suburbs, and he rode to his office in the city every morning, and home at night."

"When I had finished my course at school, and graduated with honors, at the age of eighteen, I returned home to find Archie about to enter a college, which was conveniently situated within two miles of our home. He was to return home every night, so father purchased a beautiful little pony for him to ride."

"Soon after this father began to remain in the city for three or four days without returning home—he found that he was so wearisome—and sometimes two weeks elapsed before he would make his appearance at home. Every night I listened for the clatter of hoofs and the boyish shout as Archie dashed up the drive. We had many a gay romp in the old orchards during the early winter evenings."

"Archie speedily became a great favorite with both professors and students, and he was constantly regaling me with along winded description of their games. Of course he had his particular chums. They were 'jolly good fellows' and 'regular bricks,' in his estimation at least. I was very happy in his success, and encouraged him to study hard. How little I dreamed of the blow that soon was to fall on us like a thunder clap from a clear summer sky. He began to grow restless as the winter wore on toward spring."

"One evening after his lessons were completed for the next day—I shall never forget that evening though I live to be a hundred years old—Bernardo

was brought to the door, and throwing aside his books he said, coaxingly: 'Nan, do you mind, if I go out to-night? Just a little party among the boys, you know.' He was so handsome as he stood there, whip and hat in hand, that I could not have the heart to say one word to mar his pleasure, though, I must confess, my heart sank at the prospect of the lonely evening before me. He was with a gay 'good-bye,' and the emphatic declaration that I was the 'best sister on record.' Oh! the pain we might have been spared if father had only returned home that night! But he little dreamed of the danger lurking near, and did not return home until two weeks had rolled by."

"After this, Archie galloped away every night, leaving me alone with the servants. Twickham looked grave as he read and later every night, and expressed her feelings quite freely one evening when I was anxiously watching for his return. But I flamed up immediately in his defense."

"There, now, Miss Nannie, you know I love the boy. But I have my fears, I have my fears," she replied, with an ominous shake of her head. And the subject was dropped."

"Archie, I exclaimed the next evening as he was preparing to go, what do you suppose father would say to your going out every night?"

"Oh, bother! can't a fellow have a little fun without having the old gent brought up at every corner?"

"Archie! I am surprised at your lack of respect for our dear, kind father."

"Nonsense, don't preach, for goodness sake, Nan," he answered, lightly, as he turned to go."

"I had been conscious of a change in Archie for a day or so. So faint it was that I had realized it but vaguely. But now I could not shut my eyes to the fact that something, or some one, was exerting an evil influence over him. The more I pondered on it the more perplexed I grew, and I even approached Twickham on the subject."

"I was sitting in the housekeeper's room, idly turning the leaves of my book, when I saw stirring the fire. I seized my opportunity and with a quaking heart laid the subject before her. She dropped the poker with a crash and turning abruptly faced me squarely."

"Miss Nannie," she said, "I'm glad you've spoken of it. It's been pretty heavy on my mind all day, ever since I heard—"

"Twickham!" I cried, "What did you hear?"

"Well, there's two or three of the older folks, giving wine parties to the younger ones. They have wine and cigars, and they say they have had to carry some of 'em home more'n once—got too much wine, you know. And that's where Master Archie spends his evenings."

"I could not repress a sharp cry."

"Oh, Twickham! No, no."

"There's them as knows it to be true," she answered, firmly, as she came and put her motherly arms around me and soothed and comforted me like a mother."

"He must never go again, Twickham," I wailed.

"No, honey; he won't, if you as him not to," she replied, reassuringly.

"Ah, he never did go again! How we strained our ears for the least sound! Hours passed by. It was long past midnight. At last! I sprang up with a joyful cry as the familiar clatter of hoofs rang out on the still, night air. There was a queer falling sound. A shuffling step crossed the piazza. Some one fumbled at the latch. With a white face Twickham ran into the hall. I followed her as the door swung open and in staggered Archie, falling in a heap at her feet and fumbling aimlessly at his pocket from which fell a couple of cigars. There was no mistaking the flush on his face, and the heavy stupor into which he had fallen. Something choked me and I could not utter a sound."

"There was a heavy step on the piazza. The door swung open, and father stood on the threshold. With a lightning glance he comprehended all. He reeled as though he were shot. My heart stood still. Twickham burst into tears. I buried my face in my hands to hide the terrible, agonized look he cast upon the prostrate form. Without a word, he gathered Archie up in his arms as though he were a feather, and carried him into his room and closed the door."

"All night long I lay, listening to his footsteps as paced his room. At length, as the rosy dawn struggled up in the east, I fell into a quiet sleep. I had wept until I was utterly exhausted. I awoke to find the sun high in the heavens, and Twickham sobbing by my side. There had been a storm, I learnt. Archie's brain was not yet cleared of the hateful wine. He was not accountable for his actions. Father had talked kindly and gravely to him, and she, Twickham, had pleaded with him, but he had flown into a terrible passion and rushed away on Bernardo, and father again paced steadily up and down his room."

"He soon came to me, however, and soothed and comforted me with kind words. He took all the blame upon himself, and I could not doubt his love for Archie after seeing the misery of his set and haggard countenance. But Archie did not return. No, not until they brought him home on a rude stretcher, like a bruised and broken fallen on him, injured him internally."

"I will not deceive you. There is no hope. Positively no hope," was the verdict of the family physician, who was hastily summoned."

"I was in the hall wandering aimlessly around, anxiously watching for Archie's return, when they brought him in. After one glance, I fled to Twickham's room, and paced the floor and uttered such strange heart-breaking cries that she almost lost her self-control. They sent for her immediately. She was gone for a long, long time. As the afternoon wore on and she did not return, I threw myself, face down, on her bed and mutely struggled with the terrible aching of my heart, that threatened to stifle me. I could hear hurrying feet in the hall, the opening and closing of doors, and then, all silence again."

"My poor little girl! and father bent over me. 'I have come for you,' he asked for you with his first conscious breath. And then in answer to my mute, questioning look: 'Yes, he has told me all. And is freely forgiven. Come dear.'

"I never knew how I got to the room. But I remember father whispered as I entered: 'Will me, dear, if he grows worse.' The door opened, and then closed behind me. And I sat alone with my poor, dying brother. He lay with his face toward me, and his eyes fixed upon me so wistfully, in a moment I was by his side."

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Dr. Talmage on the Lessons Taught by the Parable.

Power of the Parental Feeling—The Heavenly Father Ever Ready to Receive the Repentant Sinner—The Lord's Love Beyond All Measure.

In a recent sermon at Brooklyn Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage discoursed on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. His text was from Luke, xv, 20: "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." Following is the sermon:

One of the deepest wells that inspiration ever opened is the well of a parable which we can never exhaust. The parable I suppose was founded on facts. I have described to you the going away of this Prodigal Son from his father's house and I have showed you what a hard time he had down in the wilderness and what a very great mistake it was for him to leave so beautiful a home for such a miserable desert. But he did not always stay in the wilderness. He came back after awhile. We do not read that his mother came to greet him. I suppose she was dead. She would have been the first to come out. The father would have given the second kiss to the returning prodigal; the mother the first. It may have been for the lack of her example and prayers that he became a prodigal. Sometimes the mother does not know how to manage the child of the household. The chief work comes upon the mother. Indeed, no one ever gets over the calamity of losing a mother in early life. Still this young man was not ungreeted when he came back.

However well apparelled we may be in the morning when we start out on a journey, before night, with the dust and the jostling, we have lost all cleanliness of appearance. But this prodigal, when he started from the wilderness, was ragged and wretched and his appearance after he had gone through days of journeying and exposure, you can more easily imagine than describe. As the people see this prodigal coming on homeward they wonder who he is. They say: "I wonder what prison he has broken out of. I wonder what lazarette he has escaped from. I wonder with what plague he will smite the air." Although these people may have been well acquainted with the family yet they do not imagine that this is the very young man who went off only a little while ago with quick step and ruddy cheek and beautiful apparel. The young man I think walks very fast. He looks as though he were intent upon something very important. The people stop. They look at him. They wonder where he came from. They wonder where he is going to.

You have heard of a son who went off to sea and never returned. All the people in the neighborhood thought the son would never return, but the parents came to no such conclusion. They would go by the hour, and day, and sit upon the beach, looking off upon the water, expecting to see the sail that would bring home the long absent boy. And so I think this father of my text sat under the vine looking out toward the road on which his son had departed; but the father has changed very much since we saw him last. His hair has become white, his cheeks are furrowed, his heart is broken. What is all his bountiful table to him when his son may be lacking bread? What is all the splendor of the wardrobe of that homestead when his son may not have a decent coat? What are all the sheep on that hillside to that father when his pet lamb is gone? Still he sits and watches, looking out on the road, and one day he beholds a foot traveler. He sees him rise above the hill; first the head and after a while the entire body; and as soon as he gets a fair glance he knows it is his recreant son. He forgets the crutch, and the cane, and the stiffness of the joints and bounds away. I think the people all around were amazed. They said: "It is only a footpad. It is only some old tramp of the road. Don't go out to meet him." The father knew better.

The change in the son's appearance could not hide the marks by which the father knew him. He knew the persons of a great deal of independence of character are apt to indicate it in their walk. For that reason the sailor almost always has a peculiar step, not only because he stands much on shipboard amid the rocking of the sea, and he has to balance himself, but he has for the most part an independent character, which would show in his gait, even if he never went on the sea, and we know from what transpired afterward, that this prodigal was of an independent and frank nature; and I suppose that the characteristics of his mind and heart were the characteristics of his walk. And so the father knew him. He put out his withered arms toward him; he brings his wrinkled face against the pale cheek of his son; he kisses the wan lips; he thanks God for the long agony is over. "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him."

O, do you not recognize that father? Who was it? It is God! I have no sympathy with that cast iron theology which represents God as hard, severe and vindictive. God is a Father—kind, loving, lenient, gentle, long suffering, patient, and He flies to our immortal rescue. O, that we might realize it! A wealthy lady in one of the best and countries was going off for some time and she asked her daughters for some memento to carry with her. One of the daughters brought a marble tablet, beautifully inscribed, and another daughter brought a beautiful wreath of flowers. The third daughter came and said: "Mother, I brought neither flowers nor tablets, but here is my heart. I have inscribed it all over with your name. Wherever you go, it will go with you." The mother recognized it as the best of all the mementoes. O, that our souls might go out toward our Father—that our hearts might be living all over with the evidence of his loving kindness and that we might never again forsake Him.

In the first place, I notice in this text, the father's eyesight; in the second place, the father's heart; in the third place, I notice the father's kiss.

To begin: The father's eyesight. "When he was a great way off his father saw him." You have noticed how old people sometimes put a book off on the other side of the light. They can see at a distance a great deal easier than they can close by. I do not know whether this father could see well that

passion it; so much Heaven in it. I proclaim him the Lord God, merciful, gracious and long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth. Lest you would not believe Him, He goes up Golgotha, and while the rocks are rending, and the graves are opening, and the sun is hiding, He dies for you. See Him! See Him on the mount of crucifixion, the sweat on His brow tinged with the blood exuding from his lacerated temples! See His eyes swimming in death! Hear the loud breathing of the sufferer as He pants with a world on His heart! Hark to the fall of the blood from brow and hand and foot on the rocks beneath—drop! drop! drop! Look at the nails! How wide the wounds are laid down upon them. Of this crucifixion agony! Tears melting into sweat. Blood flowing into blood. Darkness dropping on darkness. Hands of men joined with hands of devils to tear apart the quivering heart of the Son of God!

O, will He never speak again? Will that crimson face never light up again? He will speak again; while the blood is suffusing His brow and reddening His cheek and gathering on nostril and lip, and you think He is exhausted and can not speak, He cries out until all the ages hear Him: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Is there no emphasis in such a thing as that to make your dry eyes weep and your hard heart to break? Will you turn your back upon it, and say by your actions what the Jews said by their words: "His blood be on us and our children."

What does it all mean, my brother, my sister? Why, it means that for our long lost sin, there is a Father's kiss. Love brought Him down from the agonized gate. Love led to the sacrifice. Love shattered the grave. Love lifted Him up in resurrection. Sovereign love! Omnipotent love! Infinite love! Bleeding love! Everlasting love!

"O, for this love let rocks and hills be silent! Let the sea be still! Let the Savior's praises speak!"

Now, will you accept that Father's kiss? The Holy Spirit comes to you with His arousing, melting, alarming, inviting, vivifying influence. Healer, what creates in thee that unrest? It is the Holy Ghost. What influence now tells thee that it is time to go, that tomorrow may be too late, that there is one door, one road, one cross, one sacrifice, one Jesus? It is the Holy Ghost.

My most urgent word is to those who, like the young man of my text, are a great way off, and they will start for home and they will get home. They will yet preach the Gospel and on communion day will carry around the consecrated bread, acceptable to everybody, because of their holy life and their consecrated behavior.

The Lord is seeking to save you. Your home has got to be rebuilt. Your physical health has got to be restored. Your worldly business has got to be reconstructed. The church of God is going to rejoice over your discipleship. You are not Gospel-hardened. You have not heard or read many sermons during the last few years. You do not weep, but the shower is not far off. You sigh, and you have noticed that there is always a sigh in the wind before the rain falls. There are those who would give anything if they could find relief in tears. They say: "O, my wasted life! O, the bitter past! O, the graves over which I have stumbled! Whither shall I fly? Alas for the future! Every thing is dark—so dark, so dark. God help me! God pity me!" Thank the Lord for that last utterance. You have begun to pray, and when a man begins to pray, that sets all Heaven flying this way, and God steps in and beats back the hounds of temptation to their kennel and around about the poor wounded soul puts the cover of His pardoning mercy. Hark! I hear something fall. What was that? It is the bars of the fence around the sheep fold. The shepherd lets them down, and the hunted sheep of the mountain bound in; some of them their fleeces torn with the brambles, some of them their feet lame with the dogs; but bounding in. Thank God! Saved for time, and saved for eternity.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A tree recently felled in Oregon was 120 feet long, while the butt measured only one foot through.

Broiled Sausages: Make the sausage into quite thin cakes with the hands, lay them on a gridiron, and broil them over a hot fire.

The Salt Lake Herald says one marked result of 50,000 Mormons is that that city of 50,000 had no debt and the smallest tax rate of any city in the United States—five mills a year.

It is believed by many that the seal fisheries of our northwest coast must be given up, and the seals destroyed on account of the injury that the seals do to salmon fisheries, now growing every year more valuable.

A little girl who is said to imitate her elders in words and ways, drew herself up in a dignified manner at breakfast recently, and said to her elder brothers and sisters: "Children, if you please, we will suspend with that ridiculous noise."

Chippone—"Who is that lordly looking man on the other side of the aisle?" Ukerlek—"That is a newspaper man." "Why does he put on so much style and seem so haughty?" "He is a young one, and is riding on his first railroad pass."—Inter Ocean.

According to an interviewer, Carlyle surpassed himself when first introduced to Dr. Joachim. Shaking hands with the great violinist the sage observed that he "hadn't a great opinion of musicians—they seemed such a vain, wind-baggy sort of people."

Seven of the supposed-to-be sharp and wisest lawyers in the country have made wills, passed away, and the said wills have been broken all to finders by heirs and other lawyers. An ignorant Missouri farmer wrote his will in four lines on a slate, and it stood three lawsuits and ten lawyers.

The most expensive thermometer in this country is in use at the Johns Hopkins University. It is known as Prof. Bowland's thermometer, and is valued at \$10,000. It is an absolutely perfect instrument, and the graduations on the glass are so fine that it is necessary to use a microscope to read them.

A farmer in the vicinity of St. Louis, Mich., who got into the habit of weeding into the fields to plow about noon the good wife returned and explained to her husband that it was Sunday. Neither had remembered the day of the week until Mrs. Goff found St. Louis people going to church.

Every time General Butler is asked for his opinion regarding the proper investment for an enterprising young man, he says that "rent-paying real estate" is the safest investment in the world. He always adds that no man who expects to accumulate property can afford to be mean about money matters.

The Young Man (capturously)—"And now, Floissie, it only remains for you to name the happy day. Please make it soon, very soon, darling." The Young Woman (in the kitchen a few moments later)—"Bridget, would it interfere with any of your engagements if I should be married three weeks from next Wednesday evening?"

Lottery tickets seem to be very plentiful in Louisiana just now. The southwestern Christian Advocate tells of a brother who got things so mixed up that he presented a lottery ticket for admission to a love-feast. Professed Christians are coming to be among the strongest supporters of the lottery, says a local paper.

A few days ago three families of Finlanders settled on farms in the northern part of Beadle County, South Dakota. In one of the families there are nineteen children, in another seventeen and in the third nine, the parents of the last family having been married but ten years. These families will soon be joined by four others, all relatives, numbering forty-six persons, making a total of ninety-seven persons in nine families.

A minister had traveled some distance to preach, and at the conclusion of the morning service waited for some one to invite him to dine; but the congregation dispersed without noticing him. When the house was nearly empty, the minister stepped up to a gentleman and said: "Brother, will you go home to dinner with me to-day?" "Where do you live?" "About eighteen miles from here." "No; but you must dine with me," answered the gentleman, with a flushed face, which invitation the clergyman gravely accepted.—Argonaut.

The president of the British Pharmaceutical Conference is credited with having adopted and recommended the following for the happy dispatch of poultry. A large, wide-mouthed, stoppered bottle is kept charged with an ounce of chloroform. When a chicken has received sentence of death it is held firmly under the left arm and its head slipped into the mouth of the bottle. A few deep inspirations follow, and the bird, without a struggle, becomes unconscious. Then, holding it by the legs, its neck is dislocated by a quick stretch.—Our Dumb Animals.

An intelligent dog in West Chester plays hide-and-seek with his owner, a little girl named Amy. She taught it to hide, and she says she has found much fun in playing it. Amy will tell the dog to remain in a certain place and she hides. She then calls and the dog starts on the search, finding Amy every time, no matter where she hides. Then the dog will wag his tail, show his teeth as though laughing, and lie away to the place originally designated for him by Amy, while Amy hides again, only to be found in an instant afterward by the dog.

A gentleman who lives not a thousand miles from New York City has recently been absent from home several months on business. Not long ago his wife received a letter from him, which she began to read aloud at the breakfast table. But she was somewhat interrupted by a young son and heir, who apparently found other things more interesting than the letter. "My child," she said in a tone of reproach, "don't you want to hear this nice letter from papa?" "Papa, papa," was the puzzled reply, "O, yes, you mean the man who used to live at our house."

It is said that one of the great Eastern trunk line railroads deliberately provides for a loss of many thousands of dollars a year upon the meals served in its dining-cars, and charges the loss to the advertising account, in full knowledge that the talk such prodigal outlay will create is as good as that amount of money's worth in printer's ink. A man had for breakfast in one of those cars, one day in April, a trout, a game bird, and a bowl of strawberries-and-cream, besides coffee, rolls, butter and a glass of milk. The meal cost a dollar, and his wife told him she could not buy any one of the principal dishes in the market for that sum of money.

—Texas Siftings